

PARKS & RECREATION BOARD MEETING

March 15, 2022

The Parks and Recreation Board held its monthly meeting on Tuesday, March 15, 2022 at 8:30 a.m. in the South Branch Library Meeting Room, 4310 Buffalo Gap Road #1246. Board members present were David Pittman, Gary Grubbs, Michael Homer, Robyn Wertheim and Leigh Black. Parks & Recreation staff present were Lesli Andrews, Director, Chris Gibson, Assistant Director, Richard Rodgers, Assistant Director, Bobby Brown, Seniors/Aquatics Division Manager, Jesus Coronado, Parks Division Manager, Jesse Pottebaum, Zoo Director, Stanley Smith, Legal and Janina Aguero, Secretary.

David Pittman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

Invocation: Robyn Wertheim gave the invocation.

Public Comment: Cynthia Alvidrez recommended the agenda written to include public comment sections in each agenda items. Ms. Alvidrez commented on the need for an ADA playground at Sears Park.

Presentations, Recognitions, Proclamations and Announcements: Lesli Andrews presented Chris Gibson, Assistant Director for Parks & Recreation with a service award for five years of service.

Acceptance of Minutes from February 15, 2022: Robyn Wertheim moved the minutes be approved. Michael Homer seconded. With all in favor, the motion carried.

Executive Session: The Parks and Recreation Board went into Executive session at 8:38am to discuss Section 551.071, Texas Government Code, Consultation with Attorney, and Section 551.072, Texas Government Code, Deliberations about Real Property.

1. Zoo Master Plan
2. Nelson Park Improvements
3. Lease of Park Land at Fort Phantom Lake

The Parks and Recreation Board came out of Executive Session at 9:18am with no votes or other action taken during the Executive Session.

Request to Lease Park Land at Fort Phantom Lake: Lesli Andrews discussed the direction the board would like to take on this item and how to move forward. Gary Grubbs made a motion to not enter into an agreement now, until the board gets with the City on Parks & Recreation Master Plan. Robyn Wertheim seconded, with all in favor, the motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Proposed Revisions to City Charter: Lesli Andrews discussed the City Council workshop on items that might need tweaking on verbiage. The clarification of Parks and Recreation Board and the City Manager Roles and the Parks & Recreation Director Appointment.

Public Comment: Cynthia Alvidrez asked about clarification on the City Charter revisions. Ms. Alvidrez requested the Agenda packet posted on line.

Bond Updates: Lesli Andrews discussed this agenda item was discussed at City Council Workshop. They are looking at setting a blue ribbon committee to see if City wants to have a bond election in 2022-2023 in consideration for redoing GV Daniels and Cesar Chavez Recreation Centers as well as Lake Kirby Trails. Lesli wanted the Board to know this is information only.

Public Comment: Cynthia Alvidrez wanted to remind the Parks & Recreation Board that the City of Abilene received 20 million dollars in American Rescue Plan money. Ms. Alvidrez stated she is opposed to the demolition of the Cesar Chavez Recreation Center.

Parks and Parks Facility Naming Policy Update: Lesli Andrews asked the board for clarification on the policy wording of “immediate area” for signatures collected. Robyn Wertheim made a motion to change this to read “within the City limits.” Leigh Black seconded this motion, with all in favor the motion carried.

Public Comment: None

Request to Rename Lee Park to Stafford Park- First Reading: Lesli Andrews received a request to rename Lee Park to Stafford Park and also received a request to change the name of Lee Park to Valentine Park. Parks and Recreation Board have not had time to review the second request, as the information was turned in late on Monday March 14th.

Public Comment: Shawnte Fleming commented on wanting to rename Lee Park to Stafford Park to keep in line with AISD renaming of the school. Ms. Fleming stated she is supporting Dr. Jackson on the Stafford suggestion.

Tanya Valentine Johnson spoke about the request to rename Lee Park to Valentine Park in honor of her father. Mrs. Johnson spoke about her father being a City employee and a mentor known as “Coach” to the youth of Abilene for many years.

Cynthia Alvidrez stated she had never heard of Mr. Valentine but she was supporting the name change to Valentine Park.

David Pittman made a motion to create a subcommittee for the renaming of Parks to find more information and review properly. Michael Homer seconded, with all in favor the motion carried.

Request to Charge Spectator Fee: Lesli Andrews discussed the request to charge a spectator fee for USA Softball of Texas District 11. This would be a \$5 Day Pass or a \$10 Weekend Pass. Gary Grubbs made a motion to approve the fee. Leigh Black seconded, with all in favor the motion carried.

Seniors Report: Bobby Brown gave the seniors report. Bobby said the seniors are booming and as soon as the doors are open they are there. Bobby discussed the upcoming St. Patricks Day Bingo coming up. With having new staff, Bobby stated that the seniors are making sure they are

running programs the way they like them. There will be an upcoming Easter Egg Hunt for the seniors that will be expecting a large turnout.

Public Comment: None

Parks Report: Jesus Coronado gave the parks report and discussed the cutback crew having cleared out flower beds and clearing out shrubs. The construction crew completed Red Bud and created a better drainage area for the field working with the leagues. There has also been hundreds of trees in parks, facilities and medians throughout the City that have been trimmed.

Public Comment: Cynthia Alvidrez asked about getting work at Northern Fields.

Recreation Report: Lesli Andrews gave the report for the recreation department. Lesli Andrews discussed the turnout for the Daddy Daughter Dance with over 650 attending. Steam N Wheels event is coming up on March 26th. Egg Hunt this year will feature a time for an Adaptive Hunt for any children with physical or mental disabilities. There will also be a Tournament Teen Night that will be for kids aged 10-14yrs old.

Public Comment: Cynthia Alvidrez asked about the revenue for the Recreation department. Ms. Alvidrez stated she wants to see the Parks & Recreation to be self-funded department.

Zoo: Jesse Pottebaum gave the report for the zoo. Jesse discussed the loss of Ash trees around the zoo has given them an opportunity to conserve this into art. There are several trees in the Madagascar area that have been carved to feature species from this area. The zoo has acquired 3 addax. Wild Days has begun running through March 20th.

Public Comment: None

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 10:05am.



David Pittman, Parks Board Chairman



Secretary